

GUIDE TO THE FL10 KIKUYU FILE

[The Kikuyu are a Bantu-speaking people with a population of around one million people living in Kenya. They are primarily agricultural, with important subsidiary animal husbandry. The Kikuyu became widely known during the 1950s as a result of the Mau Mau rebellion against the British Crown. Three sources in the file, 3: Leakey, 4: Kenyatta, and 5: Barnett and Njama delineate the effects of European influence upon native institutions, and the violent response of the Kikuyu (exemplified by the Mau Mau movement) against this threat to their established way of life. The authors have intimate knowledge of Kikuyu society, but each writes from a different point of view. There is general agreement, however, that overpopulation and a consequent shortage of land was the basis of popular dissatisfaction. This problem of land tenure is examined in detail by Leakey, Kenyatta, and especially by 5: Lambert.

Kikuyu social and political structure, which is based upon the extended family and age sets, is analyzed in some detail by all sources, particularly by 6: Prins. The circumcision ceremony which plays an important role in marriage, education, and age set organization is thoroughly described by Kenyatta and Leakey, as well as by others. The judicial process with its reliance on a well-defined code of compensation and trial by ordeal is best presented by 8: Dundas and 2: Lambert. 7: Routledge and Routledge is excellent for information on material culture and folk tales. 1: Middleton is a general introduction to all aspects of Kikuyu society. 9: Barnett and Njama is an autobiographical account and anthropological analysis of the Mau Mau movement. Information on kinship, marriage, polygamy, sex, childbirth, daily life, economic activities, and religious or magical practices

is included in most of the sources. All Kikuyu institutions have been categorized according to their functions. Consequently, institutions with multiple functions have been marked for more than one category: for example, mbari has been categorized as 618 or 596, and kiame either 575, 623 or 701. The file was processed between 1958 and 1974.]